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# Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

**Summary record (partial)* of the 14th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 24 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Ms. Miculescu ..... (Romania)

## Contents

Agenda item 54: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

* No summary record was prepared for the middle portion of the meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 54: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects**

1. **Mr. Ladsous** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations), paying tribute to those who had sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace and thanking Member States for the scale of their response to the growing demands of United Nations peacekeeping, said that it was a top priority to help host countries ensure the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel. He would be interested in hearing the Committee's views on how to continue strengthening the crucial global partnership at the heart of peacekeeping — between the Security Council and Member States, host countries, the Secretariat, and major regional and international organizations. A key area of concentration in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations were the developments in the Sudan and South Sudan. In July 2011, after the liquidation of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) had been established with the mandate to help build the capacity of the nascent State in the areas of rule of law and governance, while also working to protect civilians and facilitating humanitarian aid. The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), mandated to protect civilians in that border area, was also being deployed. Meanwhile, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), with virtually full deployment of personnel, continued its efforts to consolidate peace in that region, and was under review to ensure the best use of resources.

2. The difficult security environment in Afghanistan made the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) very challenging, and that operation would soon be undergoing a comprehensive Security Council-mandated review. Furthermore, the political and security impact of the major changes in some countries of the wider Middle East on the four peacekeeping operations in that region had not yet been fully assessed. In conjunction with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) led by the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was exploring with Libyan authorities how it might assist in the areas of public security, community-based policing, mine action and transitional justice.

3. In West Africa, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) had helped that country to overcome a major political crisis and constitutional challenge. UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), in close collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other partners, were now working with the respective Governments to address the new humanitarian and security cross-border challenges stemming from that recent crisis. In Liberia, undeniable progress had otherwise been made with the support of the international community in consolidating peace and establishing the steady state of security that was one of the preconditions for an eventual handover of functions from UNMIL to national authorities. The Government would, however, need continued international help in conducting the ongoing electoral process and in dealing with the remaining rule-of-law challenges it faced.

4. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), expected to depart by the end of 2012, was working closely with the Timorese authorities and others involved to develop a long-term plan for institutional and functional capacity-building, and to ensure an effective transition process. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) would help the Government of that vast country logistically and technically as it organized and conducted national, provincial and local elections from 2011 to 2013. The Mission would also continue to concentrate on its key priority, ensuring that civilians were protected through that and other critical milestones.

5. In Haiti, with the formation of a new Government, the country could now focus on rebuilding itself after the devastating earthquake of January 2010. As the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) prepared to return to its pre-earthquake troop and police levels, the Mission would focus on fostering political dialogue and consensus and strengthening the capacity of Haiti's institutions to ensure good governance and uphold the rule of law as key conditions for its eventual withdrawal.

6. One area of clear and continuing progress was in the stronger representation of women in United Nations peacekeeping. Four of the 11 Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and 30 per cent of the civilian staff were women; and the aim was to have women as 20 per cent of the United Nations Police by 2014. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations remained committed to increasing the presence of women in all areas of peacekeeping.

7. Peacekeeping tasks and missions had evolved over the years, and currently, in addition to traditional and multidimensional peacekeeping operations, there were missions devoted largely to the physical protection of civilians, such as UNISFA. The support systems therefore had to be agile and responsive to changing conditions on the ground. Delivering on complex mandates would increasingly depend on the ability to reliably deploy police and other high-calibre civilian personnel, such as rule-of-law and security-sector-reform experts, and to ensure that formed police units had adequate training and equipment. Missions involving such a range of expertise and operational capabilities clearly had to be planned and managed in an integrated manner, and had to pave the way for meeting the post-conflict needs for citizen security, justice and jobs.

8. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations planned to issue a second progress report on the New Horizon initiative in the coming weeks. In the area of mission planning and oversight, triangular cooperation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries had been strengthened, as had oversight and leadership accountability. All nine peacekeeping missions concerned and United Nations country teams now had in place integrated strategic frameworks that identified common strategic objectives and established a clearer allocation of key roles across the United Nations system; and a new internal evaluation of command and control was under way, drawing on the views of members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, force commanders from troop-contributing countries and field mission commanders.

9. In the second key area — building policy consensus on critical peacekeeping roles — the Department had undertaken a number of initiatives over the past three years. With respect to protection of civilians, it had developed a framework for the preparation of mission-specific mandates, in the field, and devised tools, including a set of training materials, to help missions achieve practical results, and at the same time assist governments to make the necessary reforms to build their capacity to protect. With respect to the peacebuilding role, the Department had, in conjunction with the Department of Field Support, formulated a strategy by which peacekeepers would set immediate priorities and sequence their own early peacebuilding tasks; without taking on the whole spectrum of longer-term peacebuilding tasks, and additional work was under way in the two related areas of transitions and the socio-economic aspects of peacekeeping. Furthermore, the Department had worked with Member States to build a shared understanding of what constituted "effective" peacekeeping. Three regional conferences, about which Member States would be fully informed, had brought together military experts to examine key practical aspects such as deterrence, use of force as agreed under long-standing principles of peacekeeping, and operational readiness.

10. In the third priority area of field support, the Global Field Support Strategy was entering its second year of implementation. Peacekeeping had been and continued to be a highly cost-effective tool for international peace and security, especially when compared to national military spending, and a unique instrument for burden-sharing. The coming year would be a critical one for shaping a comprehensive approach to the fourth key area, capability development. Three pilot projects on military components of peacekeeping that identified common baseline operational standards and developed important training materials would be completed by the time the Special Committee met formally in 2012. The Secretariat needed to work with Member States to address critical and systemic gaps in peacekeeping capabilities. Both the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support were working to improve communication with the Security Council and with troop-contributing countries about those gaps and about helicopter assets. They had also evaluated the impact of gap lists circulated periodically to Member States and the proposal to establish a clearinghouse for Member State contributions. Expanding the base of contributors to peacekeeping was an ongoing need and would require efforts on the part of potential contributors as well as a more strategic approach by the Secretariat to force generation. Innovative steps had been taken to improve inter-mission cooperation to allow a regional response

to regional conflicts, but that approach should be only a bridging measure and not a substitute for the adequate provision of capabilities to address longer-term requirements of missions.

11. Moreover, recent important reports of the Senior Advisory Group on Civilian Capacity and of the Secretary-General had discussed the issue of civilian personnel requirements. It was essential that peacekeeping reforms in that area — which must be consistent with wider United Nations reforms — should bolster both the quality and the ready availability of critical capacities. One particular need was in the area of policing, where there was a growing demand for more specialized personnel to fulfil protection-of-civilians mandates and to create or strengthen national capacity to address issues, such as community-oriented policing, transnational organized crime and border management.

12. He himself was personally committed to upholding the highest standards of conduct for all United Nations peacekeeping personnel. Constant vigilance and a zero-tolerance policy had been instituted and were being applied. In that, he relied also on troop- and police-contributing countries to ensure that such incidents were met with swift and decisive action at the national level; and to contribute only personnel whose previous conduct had been ascertained to be of the highest standard with regard to their criminal or human rights records.

13. United Nations peacekeeping had gained in professionalism over the years, but perhaps its greatest asset was the creative spark and the spirit of those who took part in what had become a major instrument for peace and security.

14. **Ms. Malcorra** (Under-Secretary-General for Field Support) said that the Department of Field Support was pursuing a professional, systematic approach that could adapt to diverse operating environments and aimed to move from simple support functions to strategic management of financial, human, technological and physical resources.

15. In the current climate of fiscal restraint, the Secretariat's 2011-2012 funding proposals for continuing missions reflected a 2 per cent reduction from the previous year, a considerable savings resulting from the abolition or nationalization of many hundreds of international staffing posts, and operating and procurement efficiencies, even as the level of peacekeeping operations remained high. The continuing implementation of a global approach to field support would realize further cost savings through the consolidation of back-office functions and reduction of in-mission footprints.

16. The bimonthly briefings by the Department of Field Support to the Special Committee had provided opportunities for regular consultation and vital feedback throughout the development and implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy. The Fourth Committee had also provided valuable insights, and would be receiving an informal paper from the Department on a proposed end state for the Strategy in 2015. The objectives of the Strategy were to expedite and improve mission support; strengthen resource stewardship and accountability while achieving greater efficiencies and economies of scale; and improve safety and living conditions of staff. It had already improved delivery of support to missions, and was now helping to ensure that appropriations were used more efficiently without compromising the level of what was being delivered.

17. Over the past year, the Department had had to operate in a rapidly evolving and diverse environment in the field. In the Sudan, it had been called upon to provide logistical support to the successful referendum held in January 2011, followed by the liquidation of UNMIS along with the concurrent deployment of UNISFA and the deployment of UNMISS in South Sudan. Another new mission, UNSMIL, had been very rapidly deployed in Libya. In Somalia, the United Nations Support Office (UNSOA) for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was approaching the third year of delivering logistical support to the African Union peacekeepers, with controlled numbers of United Nations personnel keeping essential work going despite the difficult security environment. Support had been provided to the successful elections in Liberia; and impressive logistical support planning had intensified in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in preparation for the upcoming elections.

18. The Global Service Centre, which comprised the capabilities of the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi and the United Nations Support Base in Valencia, had played a central role in responding to those operational demands, and additional functions would soon be moved to it from Headquarters. The Regional Service Centre in Entebbe had also begun to

operate and was having an immediate impact, particularly in South Sudan and Abyei. Building on its success, the Secretary-General would, in response to requests from the field, be recommending, in his next annual report on progress in the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy, the establishment of two additional regional service centres in West Africa and the Middle East.

19. Modularization had advanced: camp design had been completed and tested in the field, and reliable enabling capacities, both internal and contracted, would be on hand. Furthermore, a review had been completed of all human resources management and logistical functions, resulting in recommendations to transfer some non-strategic functions to the Global Service Centre, while retaining Member State liaison, planning and workforce monitoring at Headquarters.

20. With reference to the financial framework, the standardized funding model, which would speed up the deployment of missions, had been approved by the General Assembly at its resumed sixty-fifth session. In response to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/259, the introduction of enterprise risk management practices and letters of representation, which were both an internal control measure and a managerial accountability tool, had made for greater accountability.

21. Concerted efforts had been made to improve the processing of Member State claims for death and disability of troops and police contributed to field operations, and most pending claims had been cleared. Moreover, reimbursements to troop- and police-contributing countries had been made for contingent-owned equipment for the period up to June 2011 for all but three peacekeeping missions. The next payment was scheduled for December 2011. The Secretary-General was in the process of setting up the Senior Advisory Group to consider rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries and related issues, as requested in General Assembly resolution 65/289; and Member States would now need to respond to the Secretary-General's request for nominations.

22. Peacekeeping missions were facing severe shortages of critical capabilities, especially military helicopters. Missions also depended upon the troop- and police-contributing countries with the required capacities to continue to supply them. Her Department was working very closely with the Office of Military Affairs to find creative ways of enlarging the pool of potential contributors and ensuring a seamless management of both military and commercial assets; and procurement methods were being reviewed to address concerns raised by troop-contributing countries.

23. Civilian personnel also played a vital role in the success of United Nations peacekeeping and in the performance of complex tasks. The recent report of the Secretary-General (A/65/680) proposed a realistic set of recommendations for filling the need for qualified civilian staff in the current difficult fiscal climate. The United Nations needed to work more effectively with international partners, particularly from the developing countries, in delivering civilian support, and to plan and budget for civilian capacities in a way that better reflected changing demands.

24. Regarding the conduct of peacekeepers, the goals were to strengthen accountability within the Organization among its leaders and personnel at large, to preserve the image, credibility, impartiality and integrity of the United Nations and, above all, to protect and serve those in need. Nowhere was the Organization's commitment to its core values more visibly demonstrated, and tested, than in the exercise of the fundamental duty of care that all peacekeeping personnel owed to the local population that they served and protected. Regrettably, the exemplary record of peacekeepers over the years continued to be clouded by serious acts of misconduct by a few individuals, including inexcusable acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Secretariat was following very closely those cases where civilian staff were involved, to ensure due process within a reasonable time. She herself had personally reached out to troop-contributing countries to ensure that allegations were addressed promptly in the case of uniformed personnel. It was also critical that Member States should provide information on the status of all pending investigations, under the agreed procedure set out by the General Assembly.

25. Spurred on by the loss of peacekeepers who had died in tragic incidents, and for the sake of those serving under dangerous conditions, the Department of Field Support was pressing forward with established safety and security policies and procedures in all missions, and improving emergency preparedness generally.

*The public part of the meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 12.20 p.m.*

26. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, recalled the guiding principles of United Nations peacekeeping — consent of the parties, non-use of force except in self-defence and impartiality — that were its moral foundation, and emphasized also the need to respect sovereign equality, political independence, territorial integrity and non-intervention. The Movement stressed the need to ensure the safety of the personnel serving in missions worldwide and to equip them to carry out their vital and often dangerous tasks. United Nations peacekeeping should not be used as a substitute for addressing the root causes of conflict through a comprehensive political process. A bolder stance on the interdependence of security and development was needed. Peacekeeping operations should be provided from the outset with the needed political support, as well as with sufficient human, financial and logistical resources, clearly defined and achievable mandates, and exit strategies.

27. Peacekeeping missions had become overextended and underresourced, and that could have dangerous repercussions. More effective peacekeeping demanded proactive management of logistics and mission support, which would require remedying the well-known shortages in critical assets and equipment. As the largest contributors of troops and police personnel, the members of the Non-Aligned Movement were anxious to convey the preoccupations of peacekeepers and the difficulties they encountered. It was precisely because peacekeepers represented the Security Council on the ground and converted its words into deeds that more effective triangular cooperation was needed between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries, with full involvement of troop-contributing countries in the planning process. The time was right for implementing the recommendation in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (the Brahimi report) for a two-stage approach allowing the Security Council to leave a resolution in draft form until the Secretariat was able to confirm or deny the availability of the required troops and support elements.

28. It was also time to enlarge the base of troop-contributing countries. The flagship activity of the United Nations could not continue to be supported in the field by only a portion of its membership, with the developed countries contracting lower-cost troops from the developing countries to do the hard and dangerous work. Burden-sharing by the entire membership would, moreover, ensure unity of vision. Furthermore, it was no longer sustainable for troop-contributing countries to subsidize peacekeeping operations by making up themselves for the scarcity of resources and equipment. It was to be hoped that the Senior Advisory Group on troop costs would find ways of addressing that structural problem that hampered the ability of the United Nations to operate effectively in increasingly challenging environments.

29. The protection of civilians remained the primary responsibility of the host Government, whose efforts the peacekeepers should only support. Mission strategies for the mandated protection of civilians had to be made to work on the ground and sufficient resources must be supplied to carry out that complex task. Peacekeeping was distinct from classic warfare and should not spill over into peace enforcement. The use of force in peacekeeping must not jeopardize the strategic relation between the host country and the peacekeeping mission. The concept of robust peacekeeping was a double-edged sword that could be fatal to impartiality.

30. As the only body charged with reviewing all aspects of peacekeeping operations, the Special Committee had succeeded in moving forward a number of important operational and institutional reforms of United Nations peacekeeping. However, it had become increasingly evident that the Committee's work could be carried out more efficiently and to greater effect. In recent years, the topics discussed in the Special Committee seemed to bear little relation to the requirements in the field, to the detriment of operational effectiveness.

31. **Mr. Mayr-Harting** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Croatia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the United Nations could continue to count on European Union support for multidimensional peacekeeping on the form of either buttressing missions or funding for United Nations operations. The peacekeeping agenda for the next few years could be summarized as enhancement, effectiveness and exit. Peacekeeping needed to be

enhanced through full implementation of the New Horizon initiative, including better protection of civilians. As the scenario-based training package went into effect and as relevant missions translated into action on the ground, the Framework for Drafting Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Strategies in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations that was being developed by the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, the European Union continued to advocate the establishment of performance benchmarks and the further development of early warning tools. The peacekeeping-peacebuilding nexus needed to be further clarified by discussing the strategy for critical early peacebuilding tasks undertaken by peacekeeping operations. All peacebuilding activities should be based on national ownership, which in turn should be based on all segments of post-conflict society and should include the full participation of women. In taking a more robust approach to peacekeeping, it was essential to defer to the field and listen to the peacekeepers themselves, building on the results of the regional seminars conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The European Union continued to support the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to put in place a comprehensive capacity-driven approach to peacekeeping, by providing targeted training and ensuring coherence between military and civilian components of missions. On planning and oversight, it looked forward to the results of the ongoing evaluation on command and control.

32. With regard to effectiveness, the coming period should be dedicated to improving the Global Field Support Strategy, by for example reducing the unit cost of peacekeeping activities. The Strategy was a step in the right direction, but only a first step. The Secretariat should explore other ways to improve efficiency by reallocating resources, through a reliance on more inter-mission cooperation, assessment of the appropriateness of troop size in each mission, a redistribution of assets, or investment in labour-saving technology, such as surveillance technology.

33. As the role of a mission came to an end, responsible transition and exit strategies must be devised. Keeping the peace after peacekeeping required attention to socio-economic, environmental and security consequences of the presence of peacekeeping operations. To prevent a security vacuum from occurring after an operation was terminated, it would be necessary to invest in security sector reform. An up-to-date report by the Secretary-General on the subject could contribute to a common understanding within the United Nations system of what security sector reform actually meant, and better position it to make the most of its comparative advantages in the field. It needed to be recognized as a cross-cutting issue fundamental to broader state-building objectives. It was also important to have a clear vision and a single strategy at the country level as well that would ensure a coherent and coordinated approach. The European Union itself had long been active in the area of security sector reform in over 70 countries.

34. The European Union agreed with the Non-Aligned Movement regarding the need to improve the working methods of the Special Committee if it wanted to keep its central place in the peacekeeping machinery.

35. **Mr. Nankervis** (Australia), speaking on behalf also of Canada and New Zealand, noted with satisfaction the progress towards developing predeployment scenario-based training modules for peacekeepers on protection of civilians, including ways of responding to sexual violence in conflict. He encouraged the Secretariat to develop guidelines that would more clearly articulate the responsibilities of uniformed peacekeepers. Civilian components of peacekeeping missions also played a vital role in protecting civilians, and joint protection teams and civil affairs officers were critical to understanding the needs of local communities which, invariably, were best placed to provide an early warning of potential threats to their safety.

36. The Secretariat Framework for protection of civilians was an important tool, helping missions to consider risk analysis and mitigation measures, early warning and crisis response mechanisms. Benchmarks to help measure progress in implementing peacekeeping mandates could assist in proper management of finite resources for protection of civilians. The Secretariat should also develop further guidance on operational readiness, deterrence and the use of force.

37. Peacekeeping missions were often a small part of a longer-term effort to build sustainable peace in post-conflict societies. The International Dialogue on Statebuilding and Peacebuilding of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

had emphasized the importance of security for achieving effective development and long-term peace. The *World Development Report 2011* also established clear links between security and development and made recommendations to prevent countries from relapsing into conflict. There was scope for greater coordination between institutions such as the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council, other bodies in the United Nations system and international financial institutions such as the World Bank.

38. Peacekeeping missions often served as early peacebuilders, providing vital support to the establishment of security, political processes and restoration of State authority. In planning and coordinating early peacebuilding tasks, missions must be guided by the host nation to ensure strong national ownership and responsiveness to local needs; and the Secretariat's development of a strategy to help missions perform those critical tasks was welcome. Police and civilian peacekeepers were often integral to peacekeeping operations. The recommendations made in the independent report of the Senior Advisory Group on Civilian Capacity (A/65/747) on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict and the recent report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/66/311) were worthy of thorough and detailed consideration.

39. Significant work remained to be done to ensure that the participation of women in peacekeeping operations was increased, as advocated over 10 years earlier in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), that reform efforts in post-conflict societies were gender-responsive and every effort was made to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence. The forward-looking strategy on gender mainstreaming developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was therefore encouraging.

40. Further analysis of tools and skills to help peacekeepers meet new challenges in a meaningful and cost-effective manner and in the specific context of each mission was needed. The efforts under way to develop capability standards would further the implementation of mission mandates. Improved capabilities entailed reliance on partnerships and the comparative advantages that Member States and international organizations could bring to specific missions. Bilateral and multilateral capacity-building partnerships were also important, as were efforts to support new and emerging troop- and police-contributing countries by providing specialized personnel training. However, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should work closely with Member States, training institutes and regional organizations to ensure that all training programmes met United Nations standards.

41. Progress by the United Nations system in implementing the Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel had been slow, and the Secretariat should provide an update on action taken before the next Special Committee session.

42. There must be regular consultations between all those involved in peacekeeping, including the Security Council, the host countries and the troop- and police-contributing countries. The Security Council and the Secretariat had a responsibility to ensure that expectations about what peacekeeping missions were equipped to do were well understood. Cost-effectiveness and efficiency would assume greater importance in the current global fiscal climate, and the Global Field Support Strategy remained an important driver in securing economies of scale to improve the delivery of support to operations.

43. It was critical that United Nations missions have sustained political support. The experiences in Haiti and Timor-Leste had demonstrated the value of informal coalitions to peacekeeping missions throughout their life cycle, and similar informal mechanisms might assist other missions. Strengthening partnerships in planning and conducting operations — so much a focus of the New Horizon initiative — was also key to efforts to improve peacekeeping.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*